

What God Wants to Give Me, Part 2 - Acts 17:17 – September 28th, 2008

- On Sunday mornings, we're studying Paul's second missionary journey. He was sent out from Antioch, and has now arrived in Athens.
- He actually had to flee Berea in the middle of the night because he got into trouble with the authorities for preaching about Jesus.
- The reason the Apostle Paul keeps getting in trouble wherever he goes is because he keeps preaching the gospel wherever he goes.
- It makes you wonder if it was sort of getting to the point where Paul would probably think he hadn't been effective if he didn't start a riot.

- Upon his arrival in Athens, we see Paul taking a different approach in his preaching of the gospel to everyone and anyone he can.
- Perhaps Luke, by the Holy Spirit, details what Paul did so we could have a template of sorts with which to emulate and use ourselves.
- We can't manufacture or produce this template to emulate. It's God given, vis-à-vis the Holy Spirit. God gave this to Paul for Athens.

- This is part two of a study titled; "What God Wants to Give Me," because I believe what God gave Paul then, he wants to give us now.
- I chose this title for this study for a number of reasons not the least of which is that I didn't want to have three more sermon points to do.
- As pastors, we do err when in crafting and delivering our sermon masterpieces, we place a heavy burden on people to obey the Word.

1 John 5:3 This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, NIV

Matthew 11:28-30 28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." NIV

- Last week we talked about this danger of getting discouraged and disconnected by the disparity we see between us and Paul in Acts.
- If the book of Acts is normal Christianity, and it is, there can be this disconnect because our Christian experience looks nothing like it.
- As a result, our fruit is really plastic and fake, and we end up becoming cotton candy Christians who just play church. It's just not real.

"This fact is extremely dangerous and that from two points of view. If [one] cannot as a Christian "get the victory" (as the saying goes) he may be tempted to say, "What is the use of being a Christian at all?" and giving up his profession altogether, go back into the world. Perhaps that is the rationale behind some cases of backsliding – not that the world is so attractive, but that the person concerned cannot "make the Christian life work" and so gives up. On the other hand, he may settle for something less than the best and rationalize these things. He may say, for instance, that this is normal. If what he says is really true we need not look any further for the reason for the lack of revival in our churches: everybody is play-acting."

Roy Hession

1. A concern for the lost (Verse 16)

- While Paul was waiting for Silas and Timothy in Athens, he becomes greatly distressed because the city was full of idols.

2. An urgency for eternity (Verse 17a)

- Paul doesn't wait for Silas and Timothy, and because of the urgency of the need, starts reasoning from the scriptures in the Synagogue.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end. NIV

3. A willingness to go anywhere (Verse 17b)

17b ... **as well as in the marketplace** day by day with those who happened to be there.

v17b We're told that in addition to the synagogue he also goes into the marketplace to minister to those who happened to be there.

- This gives us a wonderful glimpse into the Apostle Paul's heart, he's willing to go anywhere, and do anything and everything for anyone.

"In the market he met with idle loungers ready to listen to anything and everything new; and even upon such soil, like the sower in the parable, he scattered his seed."

Charles Spurgeon

4. An ability to commit for the long term (Verse 17c)

17c ... as well as in the marketplace **day by day** with those who happened to be there.

- You can almost miss these three words in the third part of verse 17; "day by day," in other words Paul did this daily, day after day.
- Would to God that we would be given the needed unflinching commitment in our Christian call to run this race and finish well.

1 Corinthians 9:24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. NIV

2 Timothy 4:6-8 6 For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day-and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing. NIV

Philippians 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. KJV